



Daily Devotionals

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MATTHEW 5:1-3 *“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT”*

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¹ Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them, saying:

³ *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus begins his Sermon on the Mount by enumerating eight essential qualities of citizens of the kingdom, or the Blessed Ones. Just as the kingdom is a spiritual one, so too are the qualities of its citizens. Just as Jesus resisted the temptation to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:3-4) we must resist making the Beatitudes into a sociological mandate. These are qualities required of all citizens of the kingdom regardless of their present social or economic status. In fact, these qualities result not in happiness (an ephemeral worldly emotion) but in being blessed (ultimate well-being received as a gift). Blessedness is received rather than earned.

Simply put, there is no room in the kingdom of God for the spiritually proud and self-sufficient. There is only one Creator and ultimate sovereign over all things. God is the only truly independent Being. As contingent beings, we are dependent upon God for all things. Although this may be difficult to remember in the mundane activities of daily living, our addictions to our favorite sins should stand as vivid reminders. The fact is, just as we had nothing to do with our physical birth, we cannot reconcile ourselves to God. We can do nothing except believe in the One who was sent by the Father; sent to die the death we cannot die – the death that perfectly atones for our sins.

To be with the king is to be in the kingdom, for wherever he is, there his kingdom is also. In the royal courts, one could only approach the king by invitation. To come uninvited was an instant death sentence (Esther 4:11). Likewise, for the unholy to come into the presence of the absolutely Holy is for the former to be “un-made” (remember the closing scenes in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). But through dependence on God in Jesus Christ, we receive the cloak of Jesus' righteousness which allows us both the invitation and the protection to dwell in God's presence. Thus by accepting our dependent role and what Jesus has done for us, we realize our ultimate well-being; we are citizens of God's kingdom.

Lord Jesus, may I ever turn to you for my eternal well-being, comfort and encouragement to obedience. Thank you that you have done for me what I could never accomplish. Thank you for opening the way to the kingdom. Through your Spirit keep me ever mindful that my role is that of obedience to God and empower me to live only for the demonstration of his kingdom in this life. Amen.

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